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ABSTRACT

Calls for greater accountability in higher education have prompted responses from most faculty and administrators that self-regulation is the answer. This paper takes a quantitative approach to examining how administrative behavior is regulated, applying a social control perspective to the issues of sanctioning, detecting, and deterring deviance. A cross-sectional analysis of reported cases of wrongdoing in the "Chronicle of Higher Education" for 1986-87 and 1996-97 examined administrator conduct from several aspects: (1) administrative level, establishing eight levels ranging from regent to dean; (2) type of impropriety, using five categories: financial issues, academic issues, personnel issues, governance, and abuse of power/conflict of interest and/or other forms of legal improprieties; (3) formality of action; and (4) institutional status, ranging from research institutions to community colleges/two-year schools. It was found that despite increased calls for ethical codes and leadership, no significant increase was noted in the number of cases in the years examined, nor was any increase found in the level of public involvement in the social control of impropriety. However, a significant positive relationship was found between the professional status of the accuser and the formality of action taken; no equivalent relationship for institutional status was seen. Six tables provide statistical data. (Contains 39 references.) (CH)

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This paper was presented at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education held in San Antonio, Texas, November 18-21, 1999. This paper was reviewed by ASHE and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC collection of ASHE conference papers.

Social Control of Administrative Impropriety:
An Analysis of College And University Administrators

College and university administrators work in a complex environment, one for which the term "organized anarchy" has been deemed highly appropriate (Cohen & March, 1974). In this sometimes confusing climate and culture, they strive to carry out their duties, which serve the varied needs of the wide range of stakeholders of higher education. As they seek to meet the needs and demands of state and federal governments, boards of trustees, faculty, students, alumni and donors, and external constituents (AGBUC, 1996), college and university administrators have only basic formal rules to guide them in their decision making and governance styles. Thus, leadership in institutions of higher education is done largely on an individual basis; it is not something for which formal guidelines can be consulted. Some institutions have what they term "codes of ethics" for faculty and administrators, but these provide only rudimentary support and little guidance in the actual manner in which institutions of higher education are run.

In spite of the limited number of guidelines to assist them, administrators enjoy a great deal of freedom and autonomy. Academic administrators receive this autonomy as a result of multiple factors. First, the tradition of higher education is based on the premise of scholarly work and values; this includes the freedom to work without undue supervision as well as a supposition of impeccable moral behavior (Chambers, 1981). Because academic administrators have by-in-large come to their positions through the faculty ranks (Bess, 1984; Cohen & March, 1974), they may be granted autonomy with the expectation that they will be self-regulating, as are faculty members. In addition, the pipeline of individuals ascending to faculty and then

administrative positions may be expected to strain out candidates ill-suited for the levels of autonomy and accountability expected of the leadership position in institutions of higher education. This would thereby reinforce the autonomy granted to administrators by ensuring unsuitable applicants do not rise to these positions.

The level of self-regulation provided institutions of higher education as a whole is unprecedented in other sectors (Chambers, 1981); colleges and universities in general possess a remarkably high level of self-governance. Recently, however, there has been increased concern among external constituencies that colleges and universities are not regulating themselves in a socially conscious manner. There presently seems to be an increased public cynicism and attention being placed upon "ethical lapses" within American colleges and universities (El-Khawas, 1981; Trachtenberg, 1989). As a result, the period of self-regulatory freedom enjoyed by colleges and universities, by many accounts, is ending or already over. More and more, institutions of higher education are being called on to account for their activities (Bennett, El-Khawas, & O'Neil, 1985; Patching, 1979; Ramsey & Howlett, 1979).

The ever-growing and increased complexity and magnitude of the higher education enterprise is one reason for this erosion of public trust and support (Baca, 1983). Issues and concerns range from the balance of teaching and research to the increased number and visibility of ethical lapses of those within the institution, administrators and faculty alike. Such examples could include reports of inappropriate recruiting and admission practices (i.e. those who are not able to handle the work expected, but are enrolled to satisfy enrollment targets), passing students who have completed unacceptable work, and failing to provide counseling for those with

difficulties (Baca). Each of these reported behaviors can add to the concern of the public and calls for change in institutions of higher education.

While systematic studies of administrative wrongdoing are few, individual incidents of administrative wrongdoing in higher education have for several years received consideration in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (hereafter, the Chronicle). Such behavior now is being debated in more popular publications as well, such as *GQ* (Bogue, 1994). As Bogue notes, if the behavior of educational administrators is being discussed before the popular culture, it is time we seriously addressed the issue within our own field. The Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (1996) denotes the importance of handling this issue, commenting that, "if public confidence [in our colleges and universities] disappears, our country's future in the new global economy -- a future that depends on a highly educated work force -- will be jeopardized" (p. ix).

The erosion of public confidence in American colleges and universities, perhaps due in part to the lack of a cohesive sense of the nature of the detection and deterrence of impropriety, has led to a call for accountability on the part of these institutions. There are many reasons for society to expect the highest ethical behavior from certain persons or groups who have been entrusted with the public interest (Chambers, 1981). It is axiomatic that when privileged groups, such as scholars in higher education, fail to uphold the accepted ethical norms, society moves rapidly to expand the legal system to make compliance with those principles mandatory. The erosion of public trust and respect for higher education has yielded increased congressional attention (Bennett, El-Khawas, & O'Neil, 1985). Thus, to an extent higher education has already felt the growth of constraints and the imposition of accountability standards from governmental

forces. As early as 1970, President Nixon (March 3, 1970) stated that "all educators and administrators should be held accountable for their performance." While some suspect that his chief concern was financial accountability, it established the rise to prominence of accountability as a dominant value in higher education (Patching, 1979).

This increased public cynicism leads to a similar call from two disparate parties: 1) from external agencies and society as a whole, there is an increased call for accountability on the part of these institutions, and 2) from scholars within colleges and universities, a call for academics to regulate themselves more rigorously. A failure to increase self-regulatory mechanisms or at least to improve behavior in a manner responsive to societal needs will ultimately yield an increase of societal control of institutions of higher education. As Fisher (1991) states, "the prospect of government control has never loomed so large" (p. 4). This runs contrary to the academic desire for academic freedom and release from governmental control. To some (e.g., Davis & Strotz, 1985; El-Khawas, 1981), therefore, such a prospect is less than ideal.

Calls for greater accountability in higher education, then, are echoed by prompt responses from most faculty and administrators that self-regulation is the answer. However, some members of higher education have called for "educational chivalry," in which they urge their colleagues to accept external regulation, especially in those areas which institutions of higher education do not best represent the interests of their clients (Farago, 1981). This internal call for the acceptance of external regulations, though, is rare. By far more common is the belief that self-regulation is more effective and appropriate (El-Khawas, 1976; 1981; Bennett, El-Khawas, & O'Neil, 1985). Self-regulation also helps maintain and "ensure the health, integrity, and diversity of American

higher education" (Davis & Strotz, 1985, p. 103). Bennett, El-Khawas, and O'Neil argue that no external agency can bestow quality or integrity on a program or institution. El-Khawas (1981) presents the supposition that a voluntary approach to regulation can be more effective because it is flexible. In counterpoint, however, she notes that too often in this era of public calls for accountability, hesitation on the part of the academy to police itself has led either to governmental rules or embarrassing public criticism of higher education. Such faltering may ultimately cost higher education its self-regulatory powers. The way in which institutions solidify their claims to self-regulation and minimal outside review is by establishing impeccable reputations for quality and integrity (Miller, 1985). Higher education, through its administrators, preserves self-regulation by acting responsibly and quickly to preserve societal interests that would otherwise have to be protected by government. One final important reason to be rigorous and active in self-regulation is that academic personnel procedures, management structures, and communication systems are not well designed to defend against lawsuits (LaNoue & Lee, 1987). In the interstice between weak self-regulation and undeveloped accountability standards, there is a high likelihood of legal approaches to rectification. Unless we begin to discuss and understand the normative structures at work in American colleges and universities, and then make a conscious effort to follow accepted patterns of behavior, we are likely to find governmental stipulations to follow.

Even those that argue for self-regulation in higher education acknowledge that the manner in which such regulation is conducted needs improvement (El-Khawas, 1981). In order for campus control to be effective, there must be a combination of both a deliberate and systematic

review and assessment by campus groups and officials, and also an examination by external peers (Bennett, El-Khawas, & O'Neil, 1985). This means that colleges and universities must have internal standards, but should also have values and norms which are consistent enough across institutions to allow external peers to agree on what constitutes appropriate behavior.

The development of such internal standards requires an analysis of the present situation of regulation and impropriety across institutions. Trachtenberg (1989) emphasizes that reporting individual incidents of behavior is not a remedy to the current problem in higher education, as the issue of lapses from ethical responsibility ultimately cannot be remedied on a campus-by-campus basis. It seems clear, then, that it is necessary to consider the general manner in which administrative behavior is monitored and regulated. The juxtaposition of an increased call for accountability with multiplying responsibilities and elevating administrational concerns necessitates the consideration of what constitutes administrative impropriety and how it is being detected, sanctioned, or deterred in higher education. The confusion surrounding administrative issues and lapses in ethical behavior provides the impetus for this study. The focus of this study therefore is to examine forms of conduct that constitute improper administrative behavior, and what forms of control are exerted on this behavior. Finally, this paper addresses the locus of social control which guides college and university administration: which stakeholders are identifying inappropriate behavior?

Conceptual Framework

As discussed above, the autonomy and power embodied in the role of the college or university administrator raises the question of how administrative behavior is regulated. The growth of public concern with impropriety in the college and university setting over the past several decades gives one a sense that perhaps the number of cases of reported impropriety has grown over time. Furthermore, it may also conceptually follow that the level of public control and state regulation has grown over time. However, there is no existing scientific data to provide evidence of either trend. The application of a social control perspective may prove particularly helpful in answering questions such as these.

Rather than focusing on why people deviate, social control theory focuses on those factors which prevent people from deviating from accepted patterns of behavior (Traub and Little, 1994). The issues of sanctioning, detecting, and deterring deviance are all aspects of social control. College and university administrators pose an interesting population to consider with a social control lens, as their behavior may be controlled or scrutinized by several constituencies: government officials, students, faculty, boards of trustees, other administrators, or even the external community. For these reasons, this study therefore adopts a social control perspective.

In studying administrators and their conduct, there are several focal points which also require further illumination (see Table 1 for definition of variables). First, it is important to control for administrative level. Higgerson and Rehwaldt (1993) indicate one possible hierarchy of administrators. They place regents at the top of the system, followed by trustees, the system

head, president, legal counsel, down to provost and vice-presidents, admissions and recruiting, and so on. This system provided a basic framework for the scale developed for use in this study. Based on the type of data which was available, Higgerson and Rehwaldt's framework is condensed into eight possible levels of administration, ranging from regent to dean. To avoid confusion in the conceptual chain, all professionals who did not occupy an academic administrative position were placed at the bottom of the hierarchy in a "non-academic administrator" position.

Another issue is the type of impropriety of which the administrator is a part. Holmes (1993) proposes two taxonomies of ethical issues. One way of typifying such behavior is according to the statutory prohibitions, such as abuses of power or conflicts of interest. Another manner in which to categorize prohibited acts is by utilizing the six areas of university governance: financial issues, academic issues, personnel issues, student press, student athletics, and campus organizations. To coincide with the data found in this study, a schema of five categories was used: financial issues, academic issues, personnel issues, governance, and finally abuse of power, conflict of interest, or other form of legal impropriety, such as embezzlement or fraud. While abuse of power and conflict of interest were initially separated from legal concerns, the differentiation between them became contentious, and thus they were collapsed into one category.

Currently, we know some of the behaviors which are considered inappropriate and which would fit into the categories explained above. They range from those outlawed by governmental writ to actions in bad taste: physical abuse, sex activities, abusive behavior, disrespectful

relations, criminal convictions, fighting, and bizarre behavior (Gross, 1993). However, as Gross noted, such discussions are of limited use, because classifications of conduct are not standards of conduct (Gross, 1988). Such laundry lists, many of which are written without an indication of the empirical nature of the problem, do not help explain the daily workings of higher education organizations. Furthermore, because of the limited number of cases, differentiation into multiple categories such as those discussed by Gross (1993) above was impractical for this analysis.

Yet another valuable concept in assessing the status of social control in colleges and universities is that of formality of action. Formality of action refers to the level of response accorded to a given impropriety; the levels of response are ranked in a hierarchical scale. The formality of action is an outgrowth of the work of Black (1976) and Zuckerman (1977; 1988) which focused on the informal nature of actions taken in response to scientific misconduct. Administrators of higher education, for the most part, arise through the faculty ranks. It may therefore be possible that their values match highly with their faculty colleagues (e.g., Cohen & March, 1974). However, other literature indicates that administrators are different than their former faculty colleagues (e.g., Walker, 1981). As Cohen and March note, the presidents' role "is heavily regulated by social norms and conventional expectations; the world in which they live is a world of considerable ambiguity made manageable by the superimposition of conventions" (p. 153). Thus, if there is a disparity between the value sets at work in diagnosing the conduct of college and university administrators, there may be a general disagreement about what is considered appropriate, as well as a difference in which stakeholders raise questions of impropriety. These stakeholders may also take relatively stronger or less forceful approaches to

handling the inappropriate behavior.

Thus, the concept of professionalism is applicable here as well. According to Goode (1969), professionals base their decisions on the welfare of those they serve. Norms fill this function of assuring the welfare of those external to the profession are considered; norms are self-policed within the profession to prevent spillage of inappropriate behavior to others. However, the enforcement of norms may differ based on one's position within the profession. Braxton and Bayer (1996), Abbott (1983), Carlin (1966), and Handler (1967) state that the higher the individual's professional status, the greater their acceptance and enforcing of organizational ethics. Thus, individuals who are higher on Higgerson and Rehwaldt's (1993) hierarchy may be expected to utilize a greater formality of action when attempting to control the behavior of those they find to be acting inappropriately.

The concept of professional status as a factor in the formality of action taken may be duplicated at the institutional level (Carnegie Foundation, 1994) as well. In terms of professional status, research institutions would be considered at the top of the hierarchy. They would be followed by doctoral granting institutions, masters institutions, and baccalaureate granting colleges and universities. At the bottom level of the status hierarchy would be community colleges or two-year schools which provide the Associate of Arts degrees.

Based on these conceptualizations, this paper derived the following hypotheses:

H_1 = The number of reported instances of deviant behavior has increased significantly over the past ten years.

H_2 = The level of public social control has increased over the past ten years.

H_3 = The higher the level of the individual reporting the unethical behavior, the higher the level of formality of action taken.

H_4 = The higher the Carnegie classification of the institution, the greater the level of formality of the action taken.

Methodology

This study adopts a quantitative approach to analyzing the present state of administrative impropriety. A cross-sectional analysis of the reported cases of wrongdoing in the Chronicle of Higher Education in the 1986-1987 and 1996-1997 years was conducted to answer the research questions. In examining sensitive issues, such as impropriety, the researcher has a limited number of options. Interviews may yield little, and are extremely time-consuming in finding out general trends. However, police reports and ledgers report only hard core or extreme cases of inappropriate behavior (Gardiner & Lyman, 1978), and their availability make data collection difficult. They therefore are not of much use for this study.

A publication such as the Chronicle lists infractions of formal rules, some of which are indeed extreme. It also lists instances of faculty votes of no confidence or student and faculty calls for the removal or resignation of administrators, such as occur when administrators are accused of violating accepted management practices. As such, the Chronicle represents the best option in conducting such a study. As noted by an analyst at the Applied Systems Institute, retained by the U.S. Department of Education, "of all sources pursued for investigating the issues of abuse of power/funds by college and university presidents, and facilities and services for

students, only the Chronicle of Higher Education yielded usable information" (Ekels, 1987). While limited, the Chronicle provides a solid first step in analyzing the status of administrator impropriety.

In drawing upon Chronicle reports, several forms of data were collected. First, the position of the administrator accused of impropriety was recorded. Other data included: institutional type, type of violation, formality of action taken, and the source of the social control; careful record was made of which party or parties attempted to deter administrators' behavior (See Table 1 for complete list and description of variables). At times, it was impossible to determine the level of the administrator or the locus of social control; these cases were omitted rather than mean substitution to avoid creating confusion over the level of cases attributed to a certain level of administrator. Other cases were omitted because they were not a part of a single institution, but instead were systemic in nature. That is, they applied to an entire state system. Placing such cases in the correct sequence for formality of action was confounding. Finally, in cases which applied to the release of multiple trustees for the same cause, such as political motivations, were coded as one. The rationale for this decision is that the inclusion of such instances as five or more cases would have skewed the results of this study given the relatively small number of instances of impropriety.

In instances where the case was ongoing over the period of time the data was being collected, the highest level of formality of action was considered, and all reports were treated as one instance. For example, consider an instance in which, over the course of several Chronicle issues, a president initially received a vote of no confidence, then was fired after a formal

investigation found discrimination. Such a response would be coded as only one instance of discrimination which ended in a removal from office, which originated with faculty as the source of social control.

Because no type of work had been done in this area before, the design emerged over time. The data was reviewed several times to create the appropriate categories, as well as to be sure each case was placed in the correct categories. The resulting data provided 115 cases across the two years, 62 from September 1986 to August 1987, and 53 between September 1996 to August 1997. These two years were chosen because they were the most recent ten year span which had complete data available at the time the data was gathered. T-tests were conducted on each of the five major variables used in this study to determine if there were any significant changes over the ten years. As none of them proved significant, the data from 1986 and 1996 were combined to increase the variance available for this study and to thereby give an aggregate or composite sense of the nature of social control of administrative behavior over the span of ten years, rather than targeting the differences between the years.

After the cases were collected and cleaned, Pearson's correlation was conducted to ensure high levels of multi-collinearity did not exist which could indicate spurious results. As the highest correlational coefficient value was 0.29, it was essentially not a point of concern (see Table 2). Table 2 also summarizes the means and standard deviations, as well as frequencies, for each of the two years was computed separately, as well as jointly, to address the first hypothesis. Skewness was also tested, but again as the highest result was 1.30, it was not a cause for concern, nor did it require statistical revision. The third set of information computed

was the percentages of the level of formality of action taken by each level of professional status, that is the source defining the behavior as inappropriate, as well as the institutional type at which the behavior occurred. Finally, the formality of action taken was regressed on the other variables for both 1986 and 1996, as well as on the combined, aggregate data from the two years.

Findings

As noted, t-tests were run on each of the five variables to establish if the two years could be aggregated, as well as to respond to the first two hypothesis proposed in this study. While the number of cases actually decreased over the ten years (from 62 in 1986 and 53 in 1996), there was no significant difference in which administrative levels were involved in impropriety, nor did the types of behavior classified as improper change significantly in that time. Institutional status was also found to have not changed significantly.

While the t-tests were not significant, the percentage of cases as analyzed by institutional type and administrator level do provide some insight into the phenomenon of administrative impropriety. The majority of the instances reported involved inappropriate behavior at the level of the president. Across the two years, fifty-one percent of the reported cases focused on presidential behavior. Regents accounted for only two percent, trustees nine percent, and three percent referred to system heads. Meanwhile, provosts and deans accounted for nine and eight percent of the reported cases respectively. Chairs were discussed in three percent of the cases, and non-academic personnel accounted for sixteen percent of the cases.

There was also a higher occurrence of impropriety in the higher status institutional types: on average, of the cases were at the research university, sixteen percent were at the doctorate granting institution level, and thirty-two percent of the instances of impropriety included those at masters granting institutions (see Table 3). Thus, these three institutional types account for eighty-one percent of the reported cases, but only account for roughly twenty-two percent of the overall number of institutions of higher education in the observed time-span (Carnegie, 1987, 1994). These figures indicate a much higher percentage of inappropriate behavior in research and doctoral institutions than may be expected from the proportion of institutions they constitute in higher education in general. Comparatively, associate of arts institutions had infrequent cases of inappropriate behavior reported, especially given that they constitute forty-one of all institutions of higher education.

An examination of the percentages associated with varying levels of formality of action taken also presents some interesting data. The level of the action taken and reported gravitated toward the top end of the scale (see Tables 4 and 5). Averaging between the two years in this study, fifty-four percent of the reported forms of action ended in either a level four (conviction/apology) or level five (removal from office) response. Also of interest is the relatively low incidence of investigations (3.48%). Two possible reasons for this is that most investigations that were launched ultimately ended moving on to a formal charge, or else protests rarely move to a purely investigative phase.

Finally, the regression equations of formality of action computed on the other variables was significant at the .05 level, with an R^2 of 0.102 (see Table 6). Of the four main independent

variables, only the status of the person bringing the initial charges, or the control agent, was significant. Regressions run on the individual data from 1986 and 1996 had much smaller N levels, and failed to provide any significant findings.

Conclusions

The findings reported above provide evidence which can support several conclusions. Hypothesis 1, which argues that the number of cases of reported malfeasance would increase significantly over the ten year span of time, was refuted using this particular data source. In spite of the insurgence of increased calls for ethical codes and leadership, there is clearly no significant increase in the number of cases recorded in the Chronicle over this particular ten-year span. Additionally, as there was no significant change between the locus of control over the two years, Hypothesis 2, which posed that the level of public involvement in the social control of impropriety had increased, was also unsubstantiated.

The third hypothesis was significantly supported by the OLS regression conducted by computing the four independent variables on formality of action. For professional status, the coding score increases as the status of the individual increases. This is also true of the formality of action taken; a more sever response is coded higher than a less sever one. Thus, the significant positive relationship between these two variables indicates that as the professional status of the accuser, or locus of social control, increases, the greater the formality of action taken. However, the regression did not provide support for Hypothesis 4, that institutional type would show a

similar type of impact given the "professional status" of the institutions.

Discussion

Why have levels of reported cases dropped in the past ten years? One possible explanation involves the increased awareness of the problem. The increased public outcry about impropriety, as well as the use of code of ethics, may be part of the cause. As a result, administrators may be policing their own behavior even better than in the past, stopping inappropriate behavior before it rises to the level of being reported in the Chronicle or other such sources. As Table 4 indicates, faculty and administrators still exert, in terms of percentages, the greatest amount of control over administrative behavior (23 and 31 percent respectively). It may thus be possible that faculty and administrators are taking greater pains to address problems internally and thereby avoid such public scrutiny.

Another point to ponder is the preponderance of cases reported in the more prestigious colleges and universities, despite their smaller numbers. While institutions did not vary in level of formality of action taken over the two years, the sheer frequency of cases is startling. There are several rival explanations for this situation. Part of this may be due to the symbolic value that research, doctoral, and masters institutions have as prestigious colleges and universities, and that behaviors are more tightly regulated at such institutions. Thus, stakeholders may be more willing to take action to end malfeasance than those at lower prestige institutions. Or it may be that as a result of the nature of these institutions, cases involving more prestigious institutions

are deemed more "newsworthy" and therefore find press space. It may also be that faculty at institutions which are higher in professional status are expected to participate in research and teaching, and often the disagreements over the appropriate balance of the two, especially with regard to advancement and tenure, can cause tension between faculty and administrators (Walker, 1983). The proximity of stakeholders to administrators in residential institutions may be a further cause of conflict and high frequency of reports of impropriety; in community and two-year colleges, where fewer individuals are on the campus full-time, there may be less friction and subsequent argument over inappropriate or appropriate behavior.

While institutional type was not significant on formality of action taken, the professional status of the control agent was. As noted, the higher the level of the professional status of the control agent, the higher the level of formality of action taken. There are at least two possible reasons for this relationship. First, as argued by Braxton and Bayer (1996) in their piece on faculty misconduct, it could be as a result of the symbolic value of the impropriety. As they argue, the higher an individual is in their level of professional status, the more they embody the values of the culture. They are thus highly likely to enforce the norms of the organization and to impose strong sanctions against such behavior. However, their is another possible explanation. Legal limits and responsibilities form one constraint on administrative behavior. It is possible that as the professional status of the individual increases, the greater their legal responsibility under the law to govern wrongdoing. However, such an argument only works in those cases in which the inappropriate behavior breaks legal parameters, rather than socially constructed institutional ones. This would seem to fit with Gardiner and Lyman's (1978) contention that

reported cases of misconduct tend to be of a more hard-core nature. And indeed, this works well with the data found in this study. Incidents which had the highest response as protest or investigation accounted for only twenty-one percent of the overall number of cases. Thus, a full seventy-nine percent of cases resulted in the laying of some formal charge against the administrator. Therefore, this study does particularly consider those cases which are extreme violations of propriety. Again, this would perhaps explain the greater the formality of action taken by higher level administrators; there may be legal concerns they must take into account which lower level stakeholders may not have to fulfill.

The significant relation between formality of action and professional status also provides further support for the functionalist perspective on social control. According to the functionalist point of view, organizational norms define the boundaries of what is appropriate within an organization (Erikson, 1966), and that they therefore serve to constrain or control the work of individuals within the organization. In this way, the profession polices its own activities and protects the welfare of those outside the professional borders (Abbott, 1983). In this case, the aforementioned dominance of faculty and administrators in raising questions of impropriety shows evidence of a self-policing mechanism within institutions of higher education, and of social control at work. However, one possible alternative must be provided. It is possible that the high level of faculty control is due to an inherent tension between faculty and administrators in the governance and decision making process. The number of cases in this study does not allow for a more in-depth analysis of the types of issues which were points of contention between faculty and administrators.

It would seem consistent to argue that the actions of higher level administrators would be more symbolically charged and interpreted, thus causing them to have higher levels of reported malfeasance than their lower ranked colleagues. Thus, it would be expected that just as the formality of action increases as the level of the accuser increases, it may be expected that the formality of action should rise as the level of the administrator involved in malfeasant behavior increases. However, it appears that justice is indeed blind in this case. There is no significant influence of administrator level on formality of action taken.

Implications

This study is exploratory in nature, and as such one must carefully consider the implicational weight of it. One key issue is to examine more carefully the social control aspect of colleges and universities. This study indicates a strong faculty component to controlling administrative wrongdoing. A more clear examination of the faculty control on administrators would highlight the difference between political differences and actual instances of wrongdoing. Furthermore, future studies on faculty perceptions of what constitute appropriate and inappropriate behavior may give a more clear sense of the dynamic tension between faculty and administrators on college campus.

Second, more direct analysis of this problem should be conducted. This is an analysis of a secondary or even tertiary data source. While it is the best we have now, this gap should be addressed by future studies targeting these behaviors. For example, one might consider a survey

of internal auditors if all confidentiality issues could be addressed. This coincides with another implication. Such studies should make a distinct effort to address not only issues of legal misconduct, which is enlightening, but also the enforcement of informal norms and levels of social control which do not reach the Chronicle's pages. This balancing occurs on a daily basis as administrators work among the multiple levels of complexity which shape their job. A more complete understanding here would help not only our understanding of the workings of colleges and universities, it would also inform us of the types of cultures in which administrators of higher education perform. Such information should prove valuable to those starting in new positions, or even those in training to become administrators.

The two previous implications speak to future research. However, this study also has implications for governance of colleges and universities. First, administrators should recognize that faculty are heavily involved in evaluating administrative behavior and are active in patrolling the boundaries of correct and inappropriate behavior. As such, administrators need to consider closely their efforts to work with the faculty on their campuses, and to learn the normative preferences of the faculty as well. It is not a new concept that administrators have to work effectively with faculty; the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges (1996) has written that faculty have been given such power in governance that the balance actually needs to shift more power back to the administrators to allow them to do their jobs more effectively. However, this study seems to indicate the idea that shared norms and values may be important. If there is a dichotomy in their sense of what is appropriate or inappropriate behavior, faculty and administrators alike may suffer negative repercussions from the ensuing

debate. Together, then, administrator and faculty must work to find common perspectives.

Furthermore, institutions at the top of the prestige category are more likely to find themselves the topic of public scrutiny given the number of reports provided in the Chronicle of Higher Education. Whether this is due to their status or not, it behooves administrators, faculty, and other stakeholders of these institutions to be prepared to deal with malfeasance and to control behavior before it becomes public knowledge. Greater efforts at social control at the normative and cultural level may prevent more impalatable forms of impropriety which will become newsworthy. Others, such as debates over tenure, may require more active negotiation on campus to avoid the publicizing of disagreements. Such inability to arrive at decisions on issues such as tenure are particularly troubling, given that courts are slow to overturn the decisions of one's peers or institution (LaNoue & Lee, 1987).

Limitations

This study is limited by several methodological concerns. First, the author was the sole collector and coder of data. However, this provides consistency in coding. The author attempted to combat the possibility of bias by reviewing the data two times after the initial data collection to clean any possible mistakes. Furthermore, the incidents recorded were grounded in the literature, and the rational for the categories developed was peer checked with another scholar with knowledge of research on misconduct.

Another limitation was the data source itself. The Chronicle remains the best source of this form of information for now, but future studies should begin to alleviate this dearth. This

will possibly increase the number of instances considered and thereby broaden our sense of this issue, as well as ensure that cases do not have to be omitted due to the lack of knowledge of administrator level or issues such as anonymous complaints. Furthermore, due to the level of information provided in the Chronicle, it is possible to consistently garner the level of the accused administrator, thereby creating a scale that ranged from trustees down to department chairs. However, the Chronicle is not as precise on the control agent. Here, instead of separating out the various types of administrators exerting control or of the type impropriety more finely, it is only possible to lump administrators together as one control group. The importance of this difference comes when analyzing the results. It is impossible to provide any insights into the background of the administrators to see if there is any difference based on, for example, their disciplinary affiliation, race, or gender. Finally, the nature of this data is extreme; only cases which have proven to be "newsworthy" enough to print are considered in this method. The nature of social control is that it often prevents impropriety by enforcing normative compliance well before legal issues are violated. However, a study such as this does point to those behaviors which are so important that people are willing to challenge them publicly. An analysis of such behaviors provides an informative starting point for future studies in this area.

Conclusion

We still know relatively little about the nature of social control of college and university administrative impropriety. This study does give an initial glimpse into this complex problem, but in many ways raises still more questions even as it provides some answers to the way in

which malfeasance is addressed. Future studies will need to focus on collecting data as part of a well-developed research agenda rather than relying on secondary sources if they are to truly understand the informal types of control which exist in institutions of higher education. Such a focus should be the ultimate target of future study in order to allow stakeholders of higher education a better understanding of the way colleges work.

Table 1 --
Definitions of Variables

Variable	Definition
Independent Variables	
Administrator Level	Administrative hierarchy on an 8 point scale. Based on Higgerson and Rehwaldt (1993), ranked with the top administrators (in terms of status) being high. 1 = Nonacademic administrators, 2 = Chair, 3 = Dean, 4 = Provost/VP, 5 = President, 6 = System Head, 7 = Trustee, 8 = Regent
Institutional Type	Used Carnegie (1994) classification system, with increasing status. 1 = Associate of Arts, 2 = Baccalaureate I and II, 3 = Masters I and II, 4 = Doctoral Granting 1 and II, 5 = Research I and II
Deviant Behavior	Drawing on Holmes (1993), coded data into five main areas: 1 = Financial issues, 2 = Academic issues, 3 = Personnel issues, 4 = Governance Issues, 5 = Abuse of power or other illegal actions (i.e. fraud, embezzlement, etc.)
Control Agent	Pulling again from Higgerson and Rehwaldt (1993), categorized the agent of social control. 1 = External Community, 2 = Students, 3 = Faculty , 4 = Other Administrators, 5 = Trustees, and 6 = Government (i.e. police, or legislature).
Dependent Variable	
Formality of Action	Based on Braxton and Bayer (1996). Items were coded into 5 main groupings: 1 = Protest, 2 = Investigate, 3 = Accuse or charge with inappropriate behavior, 4 = Convict of behavior or receive formal apology, and 5 = Resignation or removal from office.

Table 2--
Means, Standard Deviations, and Zero-Order Correlations

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1986												
1. Administrator Level	4.05	2.00	1.00									
2. Carnegie Type	3.75	1.16	-0.13	1.00								
3. Impropriety	3.92	1.46	-0.10	0.12	1.00							
4. Control Agent	4.06	1.38	-0.14	-0.09	0.05	1.00						
5. Formality of Action	3.61	1.40	-0.20	-0.08	-0.09	0.29	1.00					
1996												
6. Administrator Level	4.55	1.53	-0.03	0.02	-0.16	-0.21	-0.07	1.00				
7. Carnegie Type	3.64	1.36	0.03	-0.17	0.01	0.02	0.34	-0.29	1.00			
8. Impropriety	4.08	1.34	0.07	0.13	-0.00	-0.22	0.15	0.06	0.12	1.00		
9. Control Agent	3.60	1.61	0.02	-0.05	-0.07	0.03	-0.17	0.14	-0.15	-0.22	1.00	
10.Formality of Action	3.34	1.48	0.21	-0.18	-0.11	0.17	-0.03	-0.19	0.00	-0.18	0.24	1.00
Combined												
1. Administrator Level	4.72	1.80	1.00									
2. Carnegie Type	3.40	1.23	-0.15	1.00								
3. Impropriety	4.30	1.69	-0.11	0.07	1.00							
4. Control Agent	3.14	1.54	-0.05	-0.11	-0.08	1.00						
5. Formality of Action	3.50	1.44	-0.17	-0.01	-0.10	0.26	1.00					

Table 3 --
Comparison of Percentages of Cases by Institutional Type

	Percent of Overall Institutions 1986 (1996)	Percent of Reported Cases 1986	Percent of Reported Cases 1996	Percent of Total Cases -- 1986 & 1996
Associate of Arts	40 (41)	6.35	9.43	7.83
Baccalaureate	17 (18)	3.17	9.43	6.09
Masters	18 (15)	34.92	30.19	32.17
Doctoral	3 (3)	20.63	9.43	15.65
Research	3 (3)	34.92	41.51	38.26

Table 4 --

Percentages of Formality of Action Taken by Level of Control Agent, Combined 1986 & 1996

	Protested	Investigated	Accused/ Charge	Convicted/ Apology	Removed/ Resignation	Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
Community	0.87	0.87	0.87	3.48	0.87	6.96
Students	1.74	0.00	4.35	0.87	0.87	7.83
Faculty	10.43	0.87	10.43	4.35	5.22	31.30
Administrator	1.74	0.87	4.35	4.35	12.17	23.48
Trustees	0.87	0.00	0.00	0.00	6.09	6.96
Government	1.74	0.87	6.09	6.09	8.70	23.48
Total	17.39	3.48	26.09	19.13	33.91	100

Table 5 --
Percentages of Formality of Action Taken by
Carnegie Institutional Type, Combined 1986 & 1996

	Protested	Investigated	Accused/ Charge	Convicted/ Apology	Removed/ Resignation	Totals
	1	2	3	4	5	
Associate Arts	0.87	0.00	3.48	0.00	3.48	7.83
Baccalaureate	0.00	1.74	1.74	0.00	2.61	6.09
Masters	6.09	0.87	8.70	7.83	8.70	32.17
Doctoral	2.61	0.00	4.35	2.61	6.09	15.65
Research	7.83	0.87	7.83	8.70	13.04	38.26
Total	17.39	3.48	26.09	19.13	33.91	100

Table 6 --
Summary Statistics of Multiple Regression Equation measuring explanatory power of variables with regard to level of formality of action taken in response to impropriety. Combined 1986 & 1996.

Variable	b	Standard Error of b	Beta
Administrator Level	-0.13	0.07	-0.16
Institutional Type	-0.00	0.11	-0.00
Deviant Behavior	-0.08	0.08	-0.10
Control Agent	0.24	0.09	0.25**
Variance explained: 0.102*			

*p < .05, **p < .01

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